

Dear Chairman Powell and Commissioners,
Television broadcasting is missing its mission. Local public affairs programs are virtually non-existent, constituting less than .5% of local programming.

Most news broadcasts leading up to the 2002 elections failed to include a single campaign story. As a citizen who wants to be informed about the political issues that affect my life, I am greatly disappointed by this lack of informative TV programming. Our democracy is at risk when many Americans don't know basic facts about issues and candidates, as was the case in the 2000 elections.

Since broadcasters have clearly failed in their obligation to serve the public interest, the FCC should define meaningful public interest requirements that include local civic and electoral affairs programming. At a minimum, broadcasters should air three hours per week of local civic and electoral affairs programming, with at least two hours devoted to substantive election coverage in the six weeks prior to Election Day.

As the elections approach, a well-functioning democracy demands that citizens have access to a diversity of opinions and voices on the choices confronting us.

Sincerely,

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